



Andrew Shea, 22, of Charlestown is one of 31 graduates of the latest Boston EMS class.

Foto: NATHAN FRIED-LIPSKI/METRO

EMS to graduate largest class ever

READY FOR INDEPENDENCE DAY

Boston EMS will have 100 extra EMTs working for the Fourth.

A year and a half ago, Andrew Shea was working as a mall security officer when he heard radio chatter about a fight breaking out. When he got to the scene, Shea found a stabbing victim lying in a pool of blood.

Despite the screaming and panic all around him, Shea immediately started applying pressure to the wound until EMTs arrived. Later, he was told the victim survived.

Shea, 22, of Charlestown, admits he wasn't sure of his career path at the time, though being an EMT had always been in the back of his mind. But saving a life that day made things a whole lot clearer.

"Even when I was young, every time I would get a checkup, my doctor would call me 'Dr. Shea,'" he said. "He would always tell me I would grow up to help somebody someday."

Shea is one of 31 EMTs graduating from the Boston EMS Academy today, the agency's largest class ever. New classes will start this month and in January, as part of a continuing effort sparked by Mayor Thomas Menino last year to bolster the ranks of one of nation's busiest emergency services departments.

Over the last year, Boston EMS has received 100,000 calls and transported 71,000 victims to area hospitals.

The number of transports also rose 7.7 percent from 2003 to 2007, and Boston EMS Chief Richard Serino said increasing staff will make the agency stronger and keep EMTs from being overworked.

The agency's goal is to have 440 employees, which includes paramedics and supervisors, Serino said. There were only 24 employees when he first started working there in 1973. "This is something that has taken a number of years to build," Serino said.

Greg St. Martin

<http://www.metrobostonnews.com/us/article/2008/07/02/03/3215-66/index.xml>